

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

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INVENTION: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
ACQUISITION OF
COMMUNICATION QUALITY

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

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5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to
10 communication quality acquisition apparatuses and methods employed in cellular mobile communication systems using spread signals such as CDMA(Code Division Multiple Access), and more specifically, to an apparatus and a method for acquiring communication quality through the CDMA pilot
15 channel in the service area.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

In the prior art communication method that divides
20 a given band into several channels and then conducts communications through such channels, the communication quality is affected by thermal noise caused by decrease in receiving power and interference noise in the co-channel and adjacent channels caused by the reuse of spatially the
25 co-channel and adjacent channels. Then, its communication quality is identified by measuring the receiving power of the channel sent from the operating base

station. Such receiving power can be measured by
extracting the signal spectrum in each desired channel by
the use of frequency converters and frequency selection
filters and then measuring the power provided from each
5 filter.

However, in the case of the CDMA method, which is
regarded as the most promising one among the future mobile
communication methods, the acquisition of communication
quality in the service area should be conducted in a
10 different way.

In the CDMA method, since the allocated band is not
divided into several channels but shared by all the
communication channels, those channels are distinguished
from each other with different codes. Therefore, in order
15 to receive signals in a given channel for the acquisition
of communication quality, the code assigned to each channel
must be identified and synchronization must be established
by detecting the code interval. Because a number of
channels are required to be measured at the same time for
20 the acquisition of communication quality, a parallel data
processing is necessary for code synchronization.
Further, since the CDMA method improves communication
quality by using a wide band, the delay profile, which is
two-dimensional data, must be acquired for the acquisition
25 of communication quality. Then, the CDMA method poses
such problems that its data processing becomes very
complicated when implementing code synchronization over

a number of channels to acquire communication quality and that the amount of data increases along with the acquisition of delay profile.

Delay during code synchronization causes failed data acquisition and thus lowers the code synchronization accuracy. It also leads to a problem of extended "measurement window", which is the time interval for the measurement of delay profile. As a result, the amount of data processing grows during measurement and the portion of meaningful data in the acquired data decreases. In addition, such an increase in the data amount caused by the acquisition of delay profile shortens the meaning data acquisition time, thus lowering the processing efficiency.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention has been made to solve the above problems and its object is, therefore, to provide an apparatus and a method for quick and efficient acquisition of communication quality. For this purpose, the invention realizes a quick code synchronization, through control of a code synchronization unit and a delay profile measurement unit, over a number of channels handled in parallel by conducting measurement using the CDMA pilot channel in the service area where the mobile communication services are provided by code-spread methods like CDMA. Then the

improvements of code synchronization accuracy and speed
enable to efficiently detect meaningful delay profile. In
addition, the measurement window can be narrowed and the
delay profile acquisition process is optimized. As a
5 result, the amount of data to be acquired is reduced so
that the communication quality may be acquired
efficiently.

In the first invention, a communication quality
acquisition apparatus receives the CDMA pilot channels
10 sent from a plurality of wireless base stations through
the use of spread signals different from each other and
has an acquisition means for acquiring delay profile based
on the spread signals in the CDMA pilot channels and a
storage means for storing the delay profile acquired by
15 the acquisition means. This configuration enables to
reduce the amount of necessary data and thereby efficiently
acquire communication quality.

In the second invention, the acquisition means
according to the first invention has a synchronization
20 means for establishing synchronization based on the spread
signals in the CDMA pilot channels, a measurement means
for acquiring delay profile by reverse spreading the spread
signals in the CDMA pilot channels and a control means for
controlling the synchronization means and measurement
25 means. This configuration enables to conduct the
synchronization detection for a plurality of CDMA channels
and their re-synchronization in parallel at a time and at

a high efficiency.

In the third invention, the storage means according to the first invention attaches the information of time and location to the delay profile acquired by the
5 acquisition means and stores the information in the storage means.

In the fourth invention, the control means according to the second invention controls the synchronization means and measurement means based on the conditions set by the
10 user for initial error detection check, re-synchronization of each mode, off-track check and automatic re-synchronization check, or on information set for the code to be measured. This configuration enables to reduce fails in data acquisition due to delays that occur
15 during code synchronization. Then meaningful data is not missed and the necessary amount of data can be minimized.

In the fifth invention, the control means according to the second invention controls the measurement means based on the synchronization point information acquired
20 by the synchronization means. This configuration enables to narrow the width of the "measurement window", which is the time interval for measurement of delay profile.

In the sixth invention, the control means according to the second invention controls the synchronization means
25 based on the check results of initial error detection, automatic re-synchronization or off-track acquired by the measurement means. This configuration enables to raise

accuracy in detecting synchronization points and to know the exact location of meaningful delay profile.

The seventh invention is a communication quality acquisition method comprising: the step of receiving CDMA
5 channels sent from a plurality of wireless base stations through the use of spread signals different from each other; the acquisition step of acquiring delay profile based on the spread signals in the CDMA channels; and the storage step of storing the delay profile acquired by the
10 acquisition step. This method enables to reduce the amount of necessary data and acquire communication quality efficiently.

In the eighth invention, the acquisition step according to the seventh invention comprises: the step of
15 establishing synchronization based on the spread signals in the CDMA pilot channels; the measurement step of acquiring delay profile by reverse spreading the spread signals in the CDMA pilot channels; and the control step of controlling the synchronization step and measurement
20 step. This method enables to conduct synchronization detection for a plurality of CDMA channels and their re-synchronization in parallel at a time and at a high efficiency.

In the ninth invention, at the storage step according
25 to the seventh invention, the information of time and location is attached to the delay profile acquired at the acquiring step and then stored at the storage step.

In the tenth invention, at the control step according to the seventh invention, the synchronization step and measurement step are controlled based on the conditions set by the user for initial error detection check, re-
5 synchronization of each mode, off-track check and automatic re-synchronization check, or on information set for the code that will be measured. This method enables to reduce the failure in data acquisition due to delay during code synchronization. Then meaningful data is not
10 missed and the necessary amount of data can be minimized.

In the eleventh invention, the control step according to the eighth invention controls the measurement step based on the synchronization point information acquired at the synchronization step. This method enables to narrow the
15 width of "measurement window", which is the time interval for measurement of delay profile.

In the twelfth invention, the control step according to the eighth invention controls the synchronization step based on the check results of initial error detection,
20 automatic re-synchronization or off-track. This method enables to raise accuracy in detecting synchronization points and to know the exact location of meaningful delay profile.

The above and other objects, features and advantages
25 of the present invention will become more apparent from the following description of embodiments thereof taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an example of
5 the communication quality acquisition apparatus according
to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating the control
process in the delay profile measurement unit shown in Fig.
1;

10 Fig. 3A shows a schematic diagram illustrating the
reception of a CDMA pilot channel sent from a specific base
station;

Fig. 3B shows an example of delay profile;

15 Fig. 4 is a flow chart illustrating an example of the
method for acquiring delay profile when the communication
quality acquisition apparatus according to the invention
receives a CDMA pilot channel sent from a given base
station;

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating an example
20 of the synchronization point detection process that the
synchronization unit executes during the initial
detection process shown in Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is a schematic diagram illustrating an example
of acquiring delay profile provided by the measurement unit
25 according to the invention;

Fig. 7A is a schematic diagram illustrating an example
of acquiring delay profile;

Fig. 7B is a flow chart illustrating an example of how to check the initial error detection shown in Fig. 4;

Fig. 8A is a schematic diagram illustrating an example of acquiring delay profile;

5 Fig. 8B is a flow chart illustrating an example of how to check the off-track shown in Fig. 4;

Fig. 9A is a schematic diagram illustrating an example of acquiring delay profile;

10 Fig. 9B is a flow chart illustrating an example of how to check the automatic re-synchronization shown in Fig. 4;

Fig. 10 is a diagram illustrating how to use the detection requested code list and detection completed code list according to the invention;

15 Figs. 11A to 11D are diagrams illustrating examples of the measurement code settings, detection requested code list and detection completed code list according to the invention;

20 Fig. 12 is a diagram showing the relationship of Figs. 12A and 12B;

Figs. 12A and 12B are flow charts illustrating examples of the synchronization point detection for the case where the re-synchronization mode is set at the automatic re-synchronization and an example of the
25 synchronization detection process;

Fig. 13 is a diagram showing the relationship of Figs. 13A and 13B;

Figs. 13A and 13B are flow charts illustrating examples of the synchronization point detection for the case where the re-synchronization mode is set at the automatic re-synchronization and an example of the re-synchronization detection process;

Fig. 14 is a diagram showing the relationship of Figs. 14A and 14B;

Figs. 14A and 14B are flow charts illustrating examples of the synchronization point detection for the case where the re-synchronization mode is set at the manual re-synchronization and an example of the synchronization detection;

Fig. 15 is a diagram showing the relationship of Figs. 15A and 15B;

Figs. 15A and 15B are flow charts illustrating examples of the synchronization point detection for the case where the re-synchronization mode is set at the manual re-synchronization and an example of the re-synchronization detection; and

Figs. 16A and 16B are diagrams illustrating examples of the output provided halfway during measurement according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Fig. 1 shows a block diagram illustrating an example of the communication quality acquisition apparatus

according to the present invention. The communication
quality acquisition apparatus 100 has a delay profile
acquisition unit 111 and a storage unit 112. The
communication quality acquisition apparatus 100 receives
5 CDMA pilot channels sent from base stations (base station
A, B, C) of different codes (codes A, B, C) at one time.
The delay profile acquisition unit 111 further comprises
a synchronization unit 121, a measurement unit 122 and a
control unit 123. The control unit 123 controls the
10 synchronization unit 121 and the measurement unit 122.

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating the control
process in the delay profile measurement unit 111 shown
in Fig. 1. The control process executed by the control
unit 123 uses measurement code setting information,
15 re-synchronization mode setting conditions, off-track
check conditions, initial error detection check
conditions, and automatic re-synchronization check
conditions, which are all determined by the user. Also
used are synchronization point information obtained by the
20 synchronization unit 121, and initial error detection
check results, automatic re-synchronization check results
and off-track check results obtained by the measurement
unit 122.

Fig. 3A shows a schematic diagram illustrating the
25 reception of a CDMA pilot channel sent from a specific base
station. Since communication quality is improved by using
a wide band in the CDMA method, the acquisition of the delay

profile is important. Fig. 3B shows an example of delay
profile. The delay profile is the electric power level
of radio waves which are drawn along the delay time of each
radio wave arriving at a receiving point in multiplexed
5 propagation paths. In order to acquire delay profile, it
is necessary to detect the code used in the CDMA pilot
channel and its repetition timing in advance and then
establish code synchronization. Code synchronization has
to be established for every CDMA channel that is to be
10 measured. Further, code synchronization must be
implemented not only at the beginning of measurement but
also during measurement each time the measurement window
is renewed and off-track takes place.

The amount of acquired data should be minimized to
15 prevent data growth resulting from the acquisition of the
delay profile that is two-dimensional data. The width of
the measurement window must be optimized. This can be
optimized by increasing the frequency of code
synchronization and refreshing the measurement window to
20 narrow the measurement window. Only meaningful data of
delay profile is thereby stored.

Fig. 4 shows an example of the method for acquiring
delay profile when the communication quality acquisition
apparatus receives a CDMA pilot channel sent from a
25 specific base station. When the communication quality
acquisition apparatus starts operation, the
synchronization unit 121 detects the synchronization

point and conducts the initial acquisition of the code used
in the CDMA pilot channel (S401). Next, initial error
detection check is executed to determine whether the
obtained initial error detection is the right one or not
5 by the measurement unit 122 (S402). If it is determined
as a failure by this initial error detection check, the
initial detection will be redone. If it is determined as
successful, the mode of re-synchronization is read (S403)
to conduct different operations based on the specified
10 mode.

If the re-synchronization mode is set at "automatic",
the measurement (S404) proceeds along with the off-track
check (S405), measurement completion check (S406) and
automatic re-synchronization check (S407). If an off-
15 track is detected in the off-track check (S405), the
operation returns to the initial detection (S401). If an
automatic re-synchronization is determined to do by the
automatic re-synchronization check (S407), the current
synchronization point is maintained, data measurement and
20 storage are implemented, while the automatic re-
synchronization (S408) is carried out to detect a new
synchronization point.

On the other hand, if the re-synchronization mode is
set at "manual", the measurement (S411) is conducted along
25 with the manual re-synchronization order check (S412) and
the measurement completion check (S413). The above
measurement operation (S411) is continued until an order

for manual re-synchronization is issued. When a manual re-synchronization order is issued, the operation returns to the initial detection (S401).

Fig. 5 shows an example of the synchronization point
5 detection that the synchronization unit executes during the initial detection (S401) shown in Fig. 4. During the synchronization point detection, the correlation between the received signal and the reference signal for each code is provided by a correlation examination. However, only
10 one correlation result is given during each code interval because the code synchronization has not been established. The synchronization point is identified by, for example, the location presenting the strongest correlation for each code and provided to the detection completed code list
15 (described later) as an output given halfway in the synchronization process.

Fig. 6 shows an example of acquiring delay profile by the measurement method. The measurement unit 122 provides the degree of correlation for each code based on
20 the synchronization point information indicated by the output given halfway in the synchronization process. Now that code synchronization has been established, correlation is given for each portion of the partial correlation intervals. This output of correlation is
25 digitized to meet the form suitable for data storage. Later, it will be correlated with measurement time to form a pair of path level corresponding to delay time. The delay

profile is thereby provided as an output given halfway in the measurement process.

Fig. 7B shows an example of the initial error detection check (S402) shown in Fig. 4. After the initialization of the check time (S701), the delay profile is observed (S702) as an output given halfway in the measurement process. If a path is detected that exceeds the initial detection threshold during the operation of determining whether there is a path exceeding the initial detection threshold (S703), the initial error detection is determined as successful (S704). If there is no path detected that exceeds the initial detection threshold, the check time is incremented (S705), and the check time and the initial detection protection time are compared with each other (S706). The initial error detection is determined as a failure (S707), if the check time is equal to or longer than the initial detection protection time, namely, only if the period of no path that exceeds the initial detection threshold is equal to or longer than the initial detection protection time. Note that the initial detection threshold and the initial detection protection time are parameters that the user is allowed to determine as the initial error detection check conditions.

Fig. 8B shows an example of the off-track detection check (S405) shown in Fig. 4. After the initialization of the check time (S801), the delay profile is observed (S802) as an output given halfway in the measurement

process. If a path is detected that exceeds the path selection level during the operation of determining whether there is a path exceeding the path selection level (S803), the check time is initialized (S804) and it is
5 determined that an off-track did not occur (S805). If there is no path detected that exceeds the path selection level, the check time is incremented (S806), and the check time and the off-track detection protection time are compared with each other (S807). It is determined that
10 an off-track has occurred (S808), if the check time is equal to or longer than the off-track protection time, in other words, if the period of no path that exceeds the path selection level is equal to or longer than the off-track protection time. Note that the path selection level and
15 the off-track protection time are parameters that are set by the user as the off-track check conditions.

Fig. 9B shows an example of the automatic re-synchronization check (S407) shown in Fig. 4. After the initialization of the check time (S901), the delay profile
20 is observed (S902) as an output given halfway in the measurement process. Next, the path level weighted average delay time is calculated (S903) and it is determined whether it exceeds the width of the one-side re-synchronization window or not (S904). Further, it is
25 also determined whether the sum of the path levels exceeds the automatic re-synchronization threshold or not (S905). If either answer is NO, the check time is initialized (S906)

and it is determined that the automatic re-synchronization will not be conducted (S907). If both answers are YES, the check time is incremented (S908) and compared with the automatic re-synchronization protection time (S909).

5 It is determined that the automatic re-synchronization will be carried out (S910) if the check time is equal to or longer than the automatic re-synchronization protection time, in other words, if the pulse level weighted average delay time exceeds the width
10 of the one-side re-synchronization window and the existent period of path where the sum of path levels exceeds the automatic re-synchronization threshold is equal to or longer than the automatic re-synchronization protection time. Note that the width of the one-side re-
15 synchronization window, the automatic re-synchronization threshold and the automatic re-synchronization protection time are parameters that can be set by the user as the automatic re-synchronization check conditions.

Fig. 10 shows the method using a detection requested
20 code list and a detection completed code list. In order to receive and handle the signals sent from more than one base station through CDMA pilot channels in parallel at a time, the detection requested code list and the detection completed code list are used. Fig. 10 demonstrates how
25 the three operations, namely, the synchronization point detection operation conducted in the synchronization unit 121, initial error detection check operation in the

measurement unit 122 and re-synchronization check operation (manual, automatic, off-track) in the measurement unit 122, and the detection requested code list and detection completion code list are related with one another.

First, the detection requested code list is initialized by the measurement code settings determined by the user. The measurement code settings describe the numbers of the codes that will be measured, names of the base stations as reference information and search numbers for list scanning. The detection requested code list is the code list of the codes that will be detected. The listed codes are referred to, from their top on the list, by the synchronization unit 121 for synchronization point detection. The code of which detection has been completed is removed from the detection requested code list and then transferred to the detection completion code list. The descriptions of the detection completed code list are the same as those of the detection requested code list except that the information about synchronization points is added in the completed code list.

The measurement unit 122 conducts initial error detection on the codes described in the detection completed code list. If the initial error detection is determined as a failure, the corresponding code is removed from the detection completed code list and then transcribed on the detection requested code list so that the operation is

returned to the synchronization unit 121. If the initial error detection is determined as successful, the storage operation begins in the measurement unit 122 and re-synchronization check operation starts. The code for
5 which re-synchronization starts is removed from the detection completed code list for re-synchronization according to the setting, either of manual, automatic or on-track. Afterward, it is transferred to the detection requested code list and the operation is returned to the
10 synchronization unit 121. If the mode of re-synchronization check is set at "automatic", the synchronization detection must be made with the current data measurement being continued. Thus the code is described on the detection requested code list, while it
15 remains in the detection completed code list.

Figs. 11A to 11D show examples of the measurement code settings, detection requested code list and detection completed code list. Fig. 11A shows the example of measurement code settings, where a user has specified eight
20 codes with the code numbers 3, 6, 9, 55, 120, 378, 412, 501. Fig. 11B shows a detection requested code list that has been initialized according to the measurement code settings. Fig. 11C shows the state of a detection requested code list after the detections of code 3 and code
25 6 have been completed. Fig. 11D shows a detection completed code list. The synchronization point is detected in the order of the search numbers described on

the detection requested code list.

Figs. 12A, 12B, 13A and 13B show examples of the synchronization point detection for the case where the re-synchronization mode is set at the automatic re-synchronization. After the start of operation, the setting of re-synchronization mode is read out (S1201). If its mode is determined to be "automatic", the processing flow branches to a flow of synchronization detection or the other flow of re-synchronization detection.

10 Figs. 12A and 12B show examples of synchronization detection. First, the measurement code settings are read (S1202) and the detection requested code list is initialized (S1203). Next, according to the list search numbers, the codes on the detection requested code list are referred to (S1205) and the detection request is examined (S1206). If there is a detection request code on the list, the detection is started (S1207). When the detection is completed for a code, the code number is removed from the detection requested code list (S1208),
15 the code number and the synchronization point are saved (S1209) in the record of the same search number on the detection completed code list. The scanning of the detection requested code list based on the search number is constantly continued during measurement (S1211, S1212).
20 Therefore, if the code number is described on the detection requested code list, its detection is conducted instantaneously. In the figures that follow, X%Y

represents the remainder given when X is divided by Y, and
&& represents logical multiplication.

Figs. 13A and 13B show examples of the re-synchronization detection operation. First, the initial
5 error detection check condition (S1301), automatic re-synchronization check condition (S1302) and off-track
check condition (S1303) are read, and then the detection
completed code list is referred to (S1305). Next, it is
determined whether detection is completed or not (S1306),
10 and the code of which code number and synchronization point
are described on the detection completed code list is
subject to the following check.

Namely, based on the check conditions and measurement
data, the automatic re-synchronization failure/success
15 check (S1307), initial error detection check (S1308),
off-track check (S1309) and automatic re-synchronization
check (S1310) are carried out. If an initial error detect
check is carried out, the operation is returned to the
detection process after the issue of a measurement
20 cancellation order (S1311), data storage cancellation
(S1312), removal from the detection completed code list
(S1313), and transfer to the detection requested code list
(S1314). The same operations are executed if an off-track
check is conducted. When an automatic synchronization
25 check is conducted, the code is listed on the detection
requested code list (S1317) and the operation is returned
to the detection process, while the current

synchronization point (S1315) and data saving (S1316) are continued.

During the check of failure or success in the automatic re-synchronization check (S1307), the initial error
5 detection check at the new synchronization point tells whether or not a new better synchronization point is found under the automatic re-synchronization. If the result of automatic re-synchronization check is YES, the detection
10 completed code list is renewed to a new one for the new synchronization point (S1318), the synchronization point being thereby renewed (S1319). If all the checks have failed and the current synchronization point is determined as the best one, the current synchronization point is maintained (S1320) and data storage starts (S1321).

15 Figs. 14A, 14B, 15A and 15B show examples of the synchronization point detection for the case where the re-synchronization mode is set at the manual re-synchronization. After the start of operation, the setting of the re-synchronization mode is read (S1401).
20 If its mode is determined to be set at "manual", the operation branches to a flow of synchronization detection or the other flow of re-synchronization check.

Figs. 14A and 14B show examples of the synchronization detection operation. Its flow is all the same as that for
25 the case of the automatic re-synchronization (Fig. 12A and 12B).

Figs. 15A and 15B show examples of the re-

synchronization check. First, the initial error
detection conditions are read (S1501) and then the
detection completed code list is referred to according to
the search number (S1503). Next, it is determined whether
5 the detection is over or not (S1504). The code of which
code number and synchronization point are described on the
detection completed code list is subject to the following
check. If a code on the detection completed code list is
determined to pass the initial error detection check
10 (S1505) or a manual re-synchronization is ordered (S1506),
the measurement (S1507) and data saving (S1508) are
canceled. Then the code is removed from the detection
completed code list (S1509) and moved to the detection
requested code list (S1510) to make the process return to
15 synchronization detection. Unless the code passes those
checks, the current synchronization point is maintained
(S1511) and data saving (S1512) is continued.

Figs. 16A and 16B show the examples of an output given
halfway in the measurement process according to the
20 invention. Figs. 16A and 16B demonstrate an output given
halfway in the measurement process obtained in parallel
for each code as the result of the operations in Figs. 10
to 15A and 15B. In the examples shown in Figs. 16A and
16B, the output is provided along with the information of
25 time and location. This enhances the effectiveness of the
data acquired as delay profile.

The present invention has been described in detail

with respect to preferred embodiments, and it will now be
apparent from the foregoing to those skilled in the art
that changes and modifications may be made without
departing from the invention in its broader aspect, and
5 it is the intention, therefore, in the apparent claims to
cover all such changes and modifications as fall within
the true spirit of the invention.